



Concussion in Sport

Concussion is a temporary loss of awareness or consciousness caused by a knock to the head. The recent ABC Catalyst story '[School of Hard Knocks](#)', gives a disturbing account of the result of continual 'knocks' to the head in American Football and Australian Rugby League players.

Any player who is complaining of dizziness, blurred vision or loss of awareness, even momentarily, must leave the playing field immediately and be watched closely. Vomiting, an increasingly painful headache, or unconsciousness lasting more than 5 minutes or a post-traumatic seizure or fit are signs of head injury and the player should be taken to hospital **immediately**.

Signs of concussion can include:

- Loss of consciousness (Can last from seconds to minutes)
- Confusion or agitation
- Memory loss & impaired information processing.
- Blurred vision
- Headache
- Loss of balance, dizziness
- Nausea

All suspected head injuries require urgent medical assessment.

Any player who has lost consciousness as a result of a fall or contact trauma during play also may have sustained a spinal injury and an ambulance must be called. Unless there is a significant reason, i.e. the player is in danger, they **must** not be moved until qualified medical or ambulance personnel arrive.

Players who have suffered concussion should:

- Receive a medical clearance before resuming training and competition. Australian Rugby Guidelines recommend a minimum of three weeks non participation period. http://www.irb.com/mm/document/lawsregs/regulations/04/23/26/42326_pdf.pdf
- Once medical clearance has been received, the player should follow a graduated return to general exercise. If any symptoms reappear, training must be ceased and the player referred back to a doctor for reassessment.
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References:

<http://sma.org.au/resources/sports-first-aid-resources/concussion/>

<http://www.mydr.com.au/sports-fitness/concussion>